



June 20, 2018

STATEMENT ON THE FORCED SEPARATION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law strongly condemns the Trump administration's policy of separating children from their families at the United States-Mexico border. Separating these children from their families is a cruel practice that will have lifelong repercussions for both the children and families. Trauma caused by adverse childhood experiences is strongly associated with mental health disabilities in adulthood. Detaining children without their families creates such trauma for children, who will experience confusion, fear, and anxiety. The situation may be even more problematic for children arriving with disabilities, as the administration has no plan for addressing their unique needs. Caregivers and other family members are similarly experiencing trauma as a result of these forced separations, with no certainty as to when or how they will ever see their children again.

Since 1972, the Bazelon Center has advocated for the civil rights of adults and children with mental disabilities. Today, we join with the many individuals and groups that have denounced this policy for what it is: a destructive practice that will harm children and their families to the detriment of our country as a whole. We call on the administration to immediately rescind this policy and reunite these families.